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THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN THE RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN AFRICA

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INTRODUCTION

Since 'participation' has become an accepted and recognizable objective in development programmes and projects, the issue of its evaluation has come into question. Evaluation is an important component of the project cycle and there is a vast supporting literature, both theoretical and applied, which covers the range of sectors and different types of projects. Whilst we can date the emerging concern for participation in development to the mid-1970s, interest in the evaluation of participation is a more recent phenomenon. Inevitably as agencies have increased support for participation and as it has begun to be implemented, so a concern for evaluation has emerged. It must be said, however, that this concern has yet to translate itself into a substantial body of literature; the truth of the matter is that both conceptually and methodologically the evaluation of participation is still in its relative infancy. In 1980 Lassen commented upon the paucity of 'practical guidelines' on how to evaluate participation; in 1989 the situation is better but we still lack substantial authoritative insights into complex issue. Indeed some authors (Rahman 1983; Rifkin 1988) have questioned whether it is at all possible to think of developing an analytical framework to evaluate 'participation' in development projects; more generally, however, a variety of projects have begun to tackle the issue and to experiment with different ways of doing this. Before exploring some of the issues involved, however, a number of important points need to be made:

(a) The parameters and the content of any evaluation of participation will necessarily be linked to the operational understanding of participation. If this understanding is limited to the notion of economic benefits derived from successful projects, physical attendance at project activities or extended project coverage, then the evaluation will probably be largely quantitative. On the other hand, if the operational understanding is more closely linked to participation as a process with a series of qualitative objects, then the evaluation will demand an alternative form;

(b) In this respect, it cannot be assumed that the more commonly used quantitative, linear approach to evaluation will be appropriate to the evaluation of participation. Whilst clearly there will be a quantitative dimension to participation, there will also be a qualitative one and this similarly will need to be evaluated. The evaluation of participation, therefore, demands qualitative alternatives to the effort, effect and efficiency criteria of conventional evaluation and, correspondingly, will demand alternative methods of information and data collection and analysis;

(c) The evaluation of participation in development projects is not necessarily the same as 'participatory evaluation'. Much literature reduces the debate on how to evaluate participation by describing techniques of participatory evaluation. But the difference is clear and uncontestable; the evaluation of participation refers to the evaluation of a specific objective or outcome of a development project, whereas 'participatory evaluation' is a technique which is widely applicable in evaluation practice. Participatory evaluation may well be a principal technique ont he evaluation of participation but it is not a substitute for the evaluation of the process itself.

In comparison with the quite substantial literature available on the economic and quantitative evaluation of rural development projects, the material

on qualitative processes such as participation is extremely limited. However now that it appears that participation as a strategy of rural development has achieved some credibility, there is an increasing urgency to be able to evaluate its outcome. However this urgency has come up against a basic problem. Paul (1987), for example, suggested that it was not an easy task to evaluate the outcome of participation in relation to its objectives. Howes (1984) came to a similar conclusion and argued that the more conventional uni-directional causality model of evaluation might not be sufficient to closely analyze and explain the outcomes of projects whose objectives are broader and more process-related. Indeed a central problem is how to disentangle the process of participation from project structure and factors which influence the functioning of this structure. Furthermore there is the problem of identifying and explaining the project's influence, as opposed to that of other social and political forces, on the process of evaluation. When we see participation as merely contributing to or receiving the benefits of a development project, then these problems become more manageable; when however we see it in a wider sense, both the conceptual and practical aspects of its evaluation appear formidable. It is, as Charlick (1984) suggests, a 'complex task' which threatens to be unworkable.

CONCEPTUALIZING THE ISSUE

Essentially the question that we have to ask is what forms of evaluation would be more appropriate to understand the outcome of 'participation' in development? In the light of the points made above, there will be in one sense two broad outcomes of 'participation' which could serve as the foci for evaluation:

(a) The quantitative and more tangible or physical outcomes which will be readily visible and which will be susceptible to statistical measurement; this is a relevant dimension of participation and could be more easily evaluated by existing techniques:

(b) Outcomes more related to participation as a qualitative process of change. These outcomes might be less visible and they will certainly be less tangible and will demand particular techniques in their evaluation.

In terms of the quantitative outcomes of participation, there would appear to be adequate techniques available to evaluate these. Where participation is defined in terms of direct contributions to projects, sharing in the economic benefits or physical involvement in project organization or decision making procedures, evaluation of participation draws upon the enormous body of literature and practice already available. In this respect 'participation' is seen as a tangible objective which can be measured as outcome at the time of project evaluation. Certainly the evidence suggests that, where projects have this understanding of 'participation', participation is evaluated as part of and in the same way as other project objectives.

Participation as a qualitative process, however, presents us with more difficult conceptual problems. Here we are dealing with forms of change which have characteristics and properties not necessarily amenable to quantitative techniques. Furthermore such techniques, if used, would probably only capture

one dimension and would be inadequate to capture the variable dimensions of the change occurring. Attempts to evaluate processes in development in recent years have often focused, for example, upon the analysis of social aspects of development projects. American researchers in the early 1970s spearheaded both the thinking and the practice in this field. Social cost-benefit analysis has also emerged as part of this line of enquiry and is now a widely recognized aspect of evaluation studies. Social impact analysis similarly is a technique advocated for understanding and evaluating the social effects of development projects. The notion of 'impact' suggests a straightforward, one-direction casualty resulting from the project and can potentially ignore the fact that the project may be in reality no more than one factor influencing a process of participation. Finally we have the broad notion of social indicators which are suggested as a means of understanding the effects, other than the strictly economic effects, of development projects.

The above forms of understanding and evaluation of the social effects or processes of development projects are useful in conceptualizing the issue of the evaluation of participation. It must be said, however, that while they provide us with some insights, as approaches they are closely allied to the widely recognized techniques of evaluating the material or tangible effects of development projects. These approaches similarly seek to measure and to give a numerical value to the supposed social outcomes of a project. This, of course, is entirely valid but it could be argued that it results in an incomplete view of the social outcome. Indeed the literature on the above approaches interprets social development largely in terms of improved health, welfare and education facilities, for example, and as such explains development in quantitative terms.

The issues, therefore, is how to understand and evaluate such non-material and non-directly production related objectives of rural development projects such as 'participation'. Conventional evaluation is dominated by a concern to measure; but how can we 'measure' qualitative change? Imboden (1980) highlighted this dilemma when she suggested that there were certain dimensions of development projects which we can judge in terms of the take-up of credit, the magnitude of fertilizer application or the eventual level of crop production, a process of participation might not follow such a predictable path. Participation is not only difficult to characterize, but it is equally difficult at the beginning of a project to predict what its outcome or effect might be. For example, a wider range of rural development projects have as an objective:

> "... to bring about the more effective participation of the people/the rural poor/the project beneficiaries".

Beforehand, however, it will be difficult to spell out precisely how this participation might manifest itself and what its eventual nature might be.

We need an approach to evaluation, therefore, which is not based exclusively on the measurement of material, but which is able also to explain what happens in a rural development project which seeks to promote participation. Participation, like poverty, is an abstract concept and, although we can attribute material or productive characteristics to the process involved, such characteristics are inadequate as the only means of explaining the many potential dimensions of participation. In other words, in dealing with 'participation',

we are not only concerned with results which are quantitative but more importantly with processes which are qualitative. Participation is a phenomenon which occurs over time and it cannot be measured simply by a single 'snap-shot' form of exercise. Participation as a process unfolds throughout the life of a project, and it has a range of characteristics and properties. The evaluation of participation, therefore, will involve a number of quantifiable aspects; it will also involve a less predictable number of qualitative aspects.

The search for a qualitative approach to the evaluation of participation in rural development projects is only just beginning. Authors such as Weiss and Rein (1970), Parlett and Hamilton (1972), Cohen and Uphoff (1977), Richards (1985), Patton (1987), Oakley (1988) AND Damadoram (1988) have provided some of the building blocks but the evidence suggests that to date their enquiries have had little impact. Essentially we are talking about two complementary but distinct approaches to evaluation which can be summarized as follows:

Quantitative aspects

MEASUREMENT - - - - - - - - - - - - - - JUDGEMENT

Qualitative aspects

DESCRIPTION - - - - - - - - - - - - - - INTERPRETATION

Qualitative evaluation, therefore, is more concerned with describing the characteristics and properties of a process like participation over a period of time and then with interpreting the data and information available in order to make statements concerning the nature and extent of the participation which has occurred. How this might be done we shall examine later. The central importance of the evaluation of the qualitative aspects of participation was underlined by the United Nations ACC Task Force on Rural Development which, in its study on monitoring and evaluation, argued that participation could not be "squeezed into a set of numbers", but that descriptive statements should be prepared with indications of the changes which have occurred. The nature of qualitative evaluation, therefore, is different from that of quantitative evaluation and it demands different indicators, different methods of collection and different analysis. It has implications for the practice of evaluation in development projects and suggests the need to broaden the basis of this practice. Reviewing the conceptualization of qualitative evaluation in these studies we can note a number of key themes which may help to give some shape to our understanding of this complex issue:

(a) Qualitative evaluation is **naturalistic** in the sense that the evaluator does not attempt to manipulate the programme or its participants for the purposes of the evaluation. Naturalistic enquiry studies processes as they occur and not on the basis of a pre-planned experiment. As a development process unfolds, a naturalistic approach would be sensitive to changes in direction, unexpected outcomes and differential impact. Since naturalistic enquiry is not

locked into searching only for predetermined and expected outcomes. it is able to identify and describe what actually happens as a result of a project;

(b) Qualitative evaluation similarly is **heuristic** in that the evaluation approach is subject to continuous redefinition as our knowledge of the project and its outcomes increases. Qualitative evaluation does not restrict itself to preformulated questions or lines of enquiry; rather it evolves, by observable changes being followed up and new questions coming to the fore. The evaluation starts with intensive familiarization and develops the exercise as a series of stages, thus building up a comprehensive understanding of the activities being evaluated;

(c) Qualitative evaluation is **holistic** in that the evaluation exercise sees the programme as a working whole which needs to be both understood and analyzed from many different perspectives. This holistic approach ensures that detailed attention is given to the different dimensions of a development project: context, participants, interrelationships with other projects activities and so on;

(d) Qualitative evaluation employs **inductive analysis** in the sense that the evaluator seeks to understand the outcome of a development project without imposing predetermined expectations. This inductive approach begins with specific observations and builds towards general patterns of project outcome; the evaluator gathers qualitative data on programme outcome through direct observation of programme activities and in-depth interviews with participants, without being limited to stated, predetermined evaluation goals. The approach also is essentially **interpretive**, built up through description of the significant facts, figures and characteristics of the project which are an accurate reflection of its overall complexity. This continuous interpretation provides the basic material which forms the basis of the project's evaluation;

(e) Qualitative evaluation, by its very nature, implies a continuous and close contact with the participants of a programme in their own environment. The qualitative approach emphasizes the importance of getting close to project participants in order to more authentically understand their realities and the details of their everyday life. The evaluator intensifies this close contact through physical proximity for an extended period of time as well as developing a closeness resulting from the shared evaluation experience. Qualitative evaluation demands participation and commitment of the evaluator and discourages detachment and distance, characteristics of other approaches to evaluation.

Qualitative evaluation is based on the assumption that development projects are dynamic and evolving and not necessarily following a predetermined direction. The approach, therefore, can be responsive to innovative projects and, more importantly, to objectives which are not easily measurable. The approach of qualitative evaluation draws considerably upon the phenomenology school of social enquiry. Emphasis is put upon the identification of key phenomena within any given context and on the systematic recording and interpretation of activities and changes around these phenomena. Qualitative evaluation also redefines the nature and activities of the evaluator by linking the evaluator both ideologically and physically with project activities and by stressing that

evaluation studies should inform, add to understanding and be responsive and readable and not merely destined for academic journals.

Before we examine methodologically the evaluation of participation, we conclude by suggesting a number of key principles which should guide this qualitative exercise. These principles are based upon a review of the albeit limited practice to date but collectively they provide a basis for the implementation of this type of evaluation:

Qualitative as well as quantitative:	Both dimensions of participation must be included in the evaluation in order to fully understand the outcome.
Dynamic as opposed to static:	The evaluation of participation demands that the entire process over a period of time be evaluated and not merely a limited snap-shot. Conventional ex-post evaluation, therefore, will not be adequate.
Central importance to monitoring:	The evaluation of a process of participation is impossible without relevant and continual monitoring. Indeed monitoring is the key to the whole exercise and the only means by which the qualitative descriptions can be obtained to explain the process which has occurred.
Participatory evaluation:	In the entire evaluation process, the rural people involved in the project have a part to play. It is not a question of an external evaluator solely determining the project outcome; the rural people themselves will also have a voice.

On the basis of the above principles and the conceptualization of evaluation discussed above, we have not to consider how we might evaluate a process of participation. We need to consider, therefore, what indicators we could use to understand this process and how such indicators could be used to collect relevant data and information.

INDICATORS OF PARTICIPATION

An indicator is the means by which the outcome of a project can be understood and, in one form or another, measured or explained. Indicators of a project's outcome, therefore, should accurately reflect the changes which have taken place, they should be able to be identified and monitored or observed, they should be intelligible and unambiguous in the sense that they do not cause confusion and they should not involve costly operations in collection and recording. In terms of relevant indicators of a process of participation, in a general sense, a number of authors have put forward ideas. At the beginning of the debate Harris (1978) suggested that we should identity the 'critical traits' of the process and use them as broad indicators; Lassen (1980) referred to 'vital signs' of participation which should serve as a framework for evaluation; Charlick (1984) proposed that the 'what', 'how', and 'where' of participation should be the basis of its evaluation: finally Rifkin, Muller and

Bichmann (1988) have developed a broad continuum of participation from wider to narrow and see these two ends of the continuum as two extreme indicators. All of the above are essentially grappling with an issue in which currently we have insufficient empirical evidence to substantiate our hypotheses. It is within the context of this statement that suggestions on relevant indicators of a process of participation should be considered. Furthermore, it should be noted that there are no model lists nor authoritative guidelines of indicators of participation.

Quantitative indicators — The literature is stronger on quantitative indicators of participation. Already different sets of lists do exist which provide a framework for the evaluation of participation in quantitative terms. The following is a composite list of quantitative indicators drawn from a number of sources:

Economic indicators:

(a) The measurable economic benefits of a project, by the use of commonly employed quantitative techniques;

(b) Who is participating in the project's benefits; an analysis of those sections of the rural population who have directly benefitted and a quantitative assessment of this benefit on their lives and their future ability to sustain the level of activities.

Organizational indicators:

(a) Percentage of rural adults within a project area who have some knowledge of the existence of the project organization;

(b) Percentage of rural adults within a project area who are formal members of the organization;

(c) Frequency of attendance at project organization meetings;

(d) Changing size of membership over project period.

Participation in project activities:

(a) Number of project groups or associations of project groups formed;

(b) Number and attendance rates at project group meetings;

(d) Total person-days of labour contributed by members to project activities;

(e) Number of project group members who acquire positions in other formal organizations.

Development momentum: (a) Number of project members aware of and in contact with development agencies' services;

(b) Number of project members who receive some kind of formal training from the project;

(c) The number of links established with similar project groups;

(d) Internal sustainability, or the ability of the project group to maintain its own development momentum.

*N.B. The above criteria represent aggregate numbers of rural people; by differentiating between different recognizable groups or strata, more detailed information could be obtained.§

Few would argue that quantitative indicators alone are adequate to fully evaluate a process of participation; but the use of such quantitative indicators is, however, a good way to start. If nothing else they provide a solid framework for at least understanding one dimension of the process. It is not enough, however, to merely aggregate the economic returns from a project, divide by the number of participants and pronounce a global index of participation: more critical will be who participates and the relationship between the aggregate figures and different project groups. Similarly, whilst the strong relationship between organization and participation inevitably leads to organizational indicators, participation in organizations is not a static or one-dimensional activity. But the commonest indicators currently used are those related to participation in project activities, and thus practice is a reflection of the economic pressures to 'cost' participation and to relate those costs to expected benefits. In all of this we can clearly see that there is a major dimension missing; this dimension involves the quality of the participation or the human and behavioral aspects of the process of participation.

Qualitative indicators:

The qualitative indicators of a process of participation are directly related to the people involved in a development project, and particularly to the changes which occur, in terms of the nature, growth and behavior of the project, client or target group as a result of the project activities. Werner (1982) and Feuerstein (1986) both emphasized the relationship between qualitative indicators of participation and behavioral changes in the project group and argued that, although they present difficulties, they could be ignored. The central difficulty is how to select relevant indicators? What particular factors, phenomena or features can we choose which will authentically represent the qualitative process of participation? In an earlier study Oakley and Winder (1981) approached this by comparing the characteristics of a project group, as explained by project staff, before a process of participation with those after a period of time. This exercise identified a number of key indicators and served as a basis for further work by Oakley (1988) in which he suggested three broad areas of qualitative indicators of participation:

Organizational growth:	(a)	Internal structuring of project group;
	(b)	Allocation of specific roles to group members;
	(c)	Emerging leadership structure;
	(d)	Formalization of group structure.
Group behaviour:	(a)	Changing nature of involvement of project group members;
	(b)	Emerging sense of collective will and solidarity;
	(c)	Involvement in group discussions and decisions;
	(d)	Ability to analyze and explain issues and problems.
Group self-reliance:	(a)	Increasing ability of project group to propose and to consider courses of action;
	(b)	Group members' knowledge and understanding of government policies and programmes;
	(c)	Changing relationship of group with project staff/group facilitator;
	(d)	Formalization of independent identity of the group;
	(e)	Independent action undertaken by the group.

It is, of course, one thing to present a list of indicators as above; the next and more difficult task is to determine how these indicators might be observed and recorded. How, for example, do we observe and make a judgement on "... an emerging sense of collective will and solidarity?" This is a very real problem and to date little research has been carried out at project level to yield any clues. Essentially we need to give some form or substance to these indicators, to relate them to some observable activity within the project so that we can observe them in action. Since qualitative indicators manifest themselves over time, we cannot simply tick them off but we must monitor them accordingly. Monitoring, therefore, has emerged as the key to the evaluation of participation and certainly as the only way to ensure a continual supply of relevant data and information.

MONITORING INDICATORS OF PARTICIPATION

The evaluation of participation involves careful monitoring, over an extended period of time, and the collection of data and observable phenomena related to both the quantitative and qualitative indicators. In terms of the quantitative indicators, this monitoring presents us with less problems; indeed it could be argued that these indicators present us with the first level of participation and that projects could begin this complex task with them. The qualitative indicators, on the other hand, are much more problematic. In the

first instance we need to identify a series of phenomena which will illustrate the qualitative indicators. Although we might accept, for example, that an "... emerging sense of collective will" would be an indicator that the project was beginning to build up a base from which people could participate. how could we identify and observe this. It is not like a plant whose growth we could easily observe; it is an intangible process which could be observed by means of key phenomena which will characterize the process. For example, if we were to observe over time the internal structuring of a project groups, we might note certain phenomena in relation to the group which might illustrate whether "... an emerging sense of collective will" was developing.

GROUP CHARACTERISTICS BEFORE AND AFTER A PROCESS OF PARTICIPATION

Before	After
(a) Individualism: lack of collective action;	(a) Group cohesion and sense of solidarity;
(b) Lack of critical analysis and inability to explain causes of problems;	(b) Internal group structure and element of self-management;
(c) Economic and political dependence on others;	(c) Increasing ability to critically analyze and discuss;
(d) Lack of confidence;	(d) Collective activities;
(e) Lack of any form of organization;	(e) Ability to deal with and relate to officials;
(f) Suspicion, isolation and fear of discussion.	(f) Interest in linking with other groups.

Source: Oakley and Winder, 1981.

INDICATORS OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

(i) The existence of already organized community groups;
(ii) The number of community groups and organizations involved in health promotion before versus after new health promotion activities are introduced;
(iii) The community's receptivity to and responsibility for solving or preventing its own health problems;
(iv) The number of existing community-based health activities and projects before versus after contact with the formal health system;
(v) Demonstrated willingness to commit community human, material and financial resources to support a CHW who would provide services specifically for that community;
(vi) An increase or decrease in the extent of coverage of health services.

Source: Rice and Boylan, undated: 7-8.

Since we have already suggested the evaluation of the qualitative process of participation would be based on description and analysis, we will need to monitor and to observe and record, on a regular and continual basis, this qualitative process unfolding. To do this we will need to structure our observing and recording around a series of predetermined aspects of the project. In this respect Oakley (1988) has suggested four aspects of a project which, if monitored continually, should provide us with relevant information and data for both quantitative and qualitative indicators:

Project or group activities:	(a)	Economic or other production activities;
	(b)	Physical or construction work;
	(c)	Collective project group work;
	(d)	Project group internal structuring.
Changes in project group behaviour:	(a)	Nature of project group meetings;
	(b)	Levels of explanation and discussion;
	(c)	People's involvement in project group discussions;
	(d)	Incidence of consensus and disagreement;
	(e)	Emerging patterns of leadership.
Group action and articulation	(a)	Independent action by project group;
	(b)	Levels and nature of contact with outside officials;
	(c)	Levels and nature of contact with other project groups or organizations.
Project-group relationship:	(a)	Nature of initial relationship;
	(b)	Building up of the project group;
	(c)	Nature of changes in relationship between project and group;
	(d)	Project withdrawal.

The above four aspects are not presented sequentially, nor that they should all be monitored simultaneously. Furthermore not all might be relevant to the project being monitored. The above constitute a framework and an indication to projects of the nature of the tasks involved. The two common steps in the process, however, which will be applicable to all projects, are:

(a) The identification of the indicators to be used to reflect the process of participation being monitored;

(b) The determining of the broad aspects of the project which will be monitored.

This exercise must be particular to each individual project since there are few universal truths in a process of participation. The above are one way of sketching out this exercise and is meant to serve as an example in the individual exercises which will need to be done for each project.

The range of examples presented are meant to serve as a resource in determining how best a process of participation might be evaluated in a particular project. The examples are not presented as universally applicable models, but more as food for thought in a difficult conceptual and practical

task. All of the examples concentrate upon the central issue of indicators and are quite different and are quite different in the way in which they seek to value or rank order these indicators. Finsterbusch and Van Wincklin (1987) and Shrimpton (1989) add numerical value to this ranking. Rifkin et. al (1988) employ the same approach but are able diagrammatically to evaluate performance of the indicators in a relative manner. All the examples concentrate upon identifying the indicators and evaluating their performance; the next important task is how these indicators might be evaluated and the information and data gathered and interpreted.

THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION AND DATA

The next stage is to consider how we might collect information and data based on the above broad framework for the evaluation of participation. In this respect we shall concentrate upon the qualitative aspects of participation; there are already ample guides on methods for the collection of quantitative data on project performance. The qualitative aspects of participation present us with the much more difficult task of information and data collection. As we have seen, the approach to qualitative evaluation is one of

description --> interpretation

in terms of a selected number of aspects of a project, and the continuous recording and observing of these aspects over time. To date little work has been done on this aspect of the evaluation process: Oakley's (1988) work is the more substantial, whilst Carr (1984), Gianotten (1986), Simmonds (1987) and Rifkin et al (1988) have also all, to varying extent, examined methods for qualitative information and data collection. Whilst it is not yet possible to talk in terms of a 'monitoring system' for qualitative evaluation, a review of these different works suggests a number of guiding principles which should influence the monitoring process:

(a) The monitoring process should be a participatory exercise in which both project staff and the rural people have equal roles;

(b) The approach of the monitoring should be one of simple but effective, with the emphasis upon the continuous monitoring of a limited amount of information and data (which can be steadily increased) rather than a grandiose exercise which is both complex and inoperable;

(c) The approach must similarly take note of the time required and, given the considerable demands on both staff and rural people, it should be realistic in the demands it makes;

(d) The monitoring process must be a continuous exercise, built into the routine of the project and with a recognized place in work patterns, and not a periodic and frantic response to sudden dearths of information and data.

The above are suggested as important principles to guide the information and data collection process. They are not presented as a universal model but should be examined in the context of the project to be monitored and adapted accordingly. Collectively, however, they do imply that the monitoring of the qualitative process of participation needs careful thought and cannot be approached in the manner of the more common belated evaluation mission.

In terms of the specific methods to be employed, there is yet little substantial field evidence of tested and proven methods in this exercise. In the first instance there is the issue of a base-line survey. Such surveys are, of course, common in development practice but do present problems in terms of the qualitative aspects of a project. In this respect we need to think in terms of some kind of project group profile, or a description of the qualitative characteristics of a group before a project begins, as can be seen in the previous section. This group profile will provide a framework for the qualitative indicators and will be the critical first methodological step. Indeed if some sort of initial qualitative group profile is not undertaken, it is difficult to imagine how an evaluation process could be established. More specifically some experimentation has begun on how to collect the information and data required. This experimentation has suggested the following forms of collection:

Questionnaire — The use of a structured questionnaire will certainly be relevant with the quantitative aspects of participation. In terms of the qualitative aspects, a questionnaire could be used to verify the magnitude of particular changes which are beginning to emerge. For example the continuous monitoring might detect the emergence of a sense of solidarity in the project groups and a sample questionnaire could be used to check this. In the use of such questionnaires, the emphasis must be put on open-ended questions which will provide the narrative and description vital to the qualitative evaluation process.

Records and reports — These records and reports which will provide the continuous account of events as they unfold, will be the basic methodological tools. They will take two forms: individual group record, which is a king of long-book in which a continual record of group activities, decisions and membership are kept; and a diary, which is a continual account of the unfolding of a process of participation.

Group discussion — Active participation in group discussions and activities of a process of participation. Hence these discussions and activities will be central to generating the information and data required. Such discussions can also be used for seeking the collective views of the project group in terms of how they see the qualitative changes occurring.

Key informant — This technique is well tried in conventional research methodology and it is suggested that, in a process of participation, key informants can often be a source of useful insights or can raise unexpected issues. Such key informants could include staff not directly involved with the project groups, local 'influentials' who may have observed the project's progress or key members of the groups themselves who have the

confidence of others and could represent their views and feelings.

Field workshop

Huizer (1983) has developed the idea of an annual field workshop as an important means of reviewing overall the nature of the participation which has occurred in a project. Such workshops give the opportunity for both project staff and group members to come together to review collectively the information and data collected over the year.

EXAMPLES OF DESIGNS AND INDICATORS FOR THE EVALUATION OF A PROCESS OF PARTICIPATION

A. Participation Questionnaire for Evaluation Code Sheet

	Value Score 1 - 7	Confidence Score 1 - 5
(i) Beneficiaries' role in the planning phase		
a. degrees of participation in original idea	[ ]	[ ]
b. degree of participation in project planning	[ ]	[ ]
c. beneficiary commitment to project	[ ]	[ ]
(ii) Beneficiaries' role in implementation phase		
a. degree of financial contribution	[ ]	[ ]
b. degree of participation in implementation	[ ]	[ ]
c. degree indigenous knowledge is used vs. dependency on outside experts	[ ]	[ ]
d. degree of organization of beneficiaries	[ ]	[ ]
e. organization is theirs vs. engineered	[ ]	[ ]
f. democracy and equality in organization	[ ]	[ ]
g. extent beneficiaries redesign project	[ ]	[ ]
(iii) Beneficiaries' role in maintenance phase		
a. degree of participation in maintenance	[ ]	[ ]
b. degree indigenous knowledge is used vs. dependency on outside experts (after project is completed)	[ ]	[ ]
c. degree ownership and control of facilities and organizations are local vs. outside	[ ]	[ ]
(iv) Project linkages to beneficiaries		
a. adequacy of communication from project team	[ ]	[ ]
b. degree project increased beneficiary capacity	[ ]	[ ]

Note: Each project is scored on a seven-point scale from 1 = exceptionally low to 7 = exceptionally high. The coder's confidence in this judgement is registered in the second score on a five-point scale from 1 = very little confidence and very strong doubts to 5 = great confidence and very little doubt.

[Source: Finsterbusch and Van Wicklin, 1987:10]

B. Analytical Framework for the Evaluation of Participation

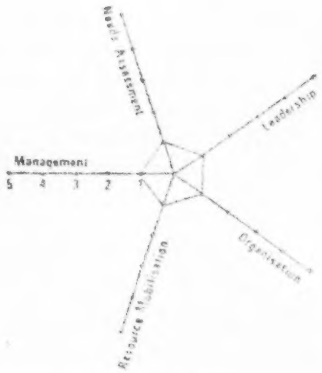

Fig. 1

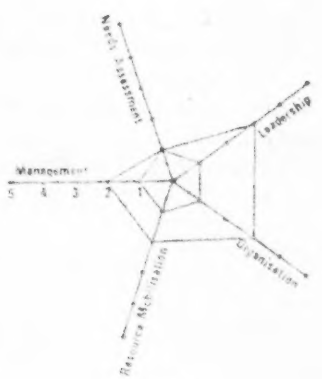

Fig. 2

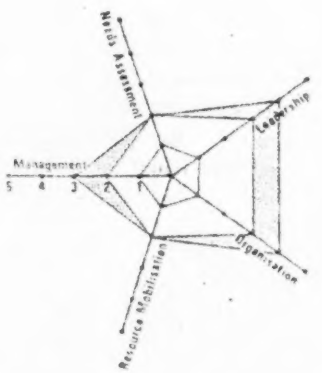

Fig. 3

STORING THE INFORMATION AND DATA COLLECTED WHILST MONITORING A PROCESS OF PARTICIPATION

(i) Give each project group a number:

(ii) Establish an individual record card system by number for each group;

(iii) Record on this card system, on a monthly basis, the following information:
- the number of group members/by sex,
- group meetings/dates,
- attendance at group meetings, etc..

(iv) Establish a general filing system for each group;

(v) Within the general filing system of each group establish an individual filing system for each aspect. These different aspects could be marked, for example, as follows:

A. Project/Group Activities
B. Changes in Group Behaviour
C. Action/Articulation
D. Project/Group Relationship

(vi) Information on the different aspects should be stored monthly, and on a separate sheet of papers, as follows:

A.1.1 (first month, A.1.2 (second month) etc.
B.1.1 (first month), B.1.2 (second month) etc.

(vii) At the beginning of the second year of monitoring, the information can be stored thus:

A.2.1/A.2.2/A.2.3 etc.
B.2.1/B.2.2/B.2.3 etc.

(viii) In order to have some continuity in recording and development of observations, only one member of the project staff should have responsibility for recording the information in any one group filing system. Probably each staff member will have responsibility for the filing systems of a number of project groups.

Source: Oakley, 1988:60-61.

The essential principles to adopt in the above information and data collection are those of experimentation and continuity. There are no universal models for the qualitative evaluation of participation, only a range of options and techniques. The above is a review of these and are presented for adaptation to the particular characteristics of the project concerned. The issue of continuity,, however, is universal since without it the necessary information

and data will never be collected and the process of participation will never be understood.

INTERPRETING THE INFORMATION AND DATA

Interpretation is the final stage in the evaluation of a process of participation. Here again we shall concentrate upon the qualitative since the statistical interpretation of the quantitative information and data presents us with less problems. This latter data will present us with one dimension of the participation which has occurred; it will be equally as important to understand the other dimensions. The interpretation of this qualitative information and data, however, presents a number of problems. Firstly, the subjective nature of the recording and observation will need to be taken into account; secondly, the differing levels of ability of project staff will influence the quality of the material obtained; and thirdly, participation can be a slow process with the result some indicators may unfold equally slowly and hence observations may lack substance. Finally, the critical importance of a base-line survey or group-profile must be re-emphasized since without some kind of initial statement, it will be impossible to interpret outcomes in relation to the previous situation.

When undertaken the interpretation should be done with as much rigor as possible. It should be a participatory exercise and involve both staff and project group members; it should also be done on a regular basis eg. every three months so that a steady profile can be built up; and where possible, verbal interpretation should be translated into some kind of diagrammatic form. The important thing is to ensure that the interpretation does not become a merely ad hoc exercise, with consequent lack of structure and authenticity, but is conducted on as 'scientific' a basis as possible. Equally important is not to spend countless hours on unstructured and endless discussion, but to structure and control a limited exercise which allows all those involved to contribute to the interpretation. This most difficult task will be to structure the qualitative material in a way that more tangibly allows us to see what the material means in terms of a process of participation. In this respect the importance of some form of visual or diagrammatic presentation must be underlined. Haque's (1977) pioneering conceptualization of this has lead to several further experiments and suggestions such as the following:

FRAMEWORK FOR INTERPRETING INFORMATION AND DATA OF A PROCESS OF PARTICIPATION

Phase of target Group participation	Indicators
Initial Phase	Building confidence Establishing Rapport Loosely Structured Meetings
Intermediate Phase	Continuous Project Group Structuring Solidarity Active Internal Participation
Principal Phase	Structured Organization Formalization Independent Action External Contacts

Source: Oakley, 1988:68.

(a) An indicators-phenomena chart: If, for example, we determine that 'increasing confidence' could be an indicator of participation, then we could identify those **phenomena** of project activities (e.g., increasing ability to take initiatives) which would reflect this 'increasing confidence'. These phenomena then become the basis of regular, monthly records and also help us to build up a visual and composite picture of the phenomena associated with a particular indicator;

(b) Phenomena recording form: As a support to (a) above, we could devise a form on which observations relating to particular **phenomena** were systematically recorded. As these observations were built-up, it might be possible at a later date to produce a check- list which could note the presence of particular phenomena over a period of time and thus provide the continuous evidence upon which to base the interpretation;

(c) Case study: Whilst monitoring will take place across the project groups, it would be useful to undertake a more detailed case study and analysis of one or a small number of groups. If we concentrated upon acquiring a detailed knowledge of the process of participation of a particular group, and although the context might vary, we could use the experience to better understand what might be happening with the other groups. Certainly a detailed understanding of one group would help with interpreting the process as it occurs with other groups.

A vital part of the interpretation overall, however, is the explanation of the emerging process of participation. In this respect we can imagine 'participation' as a series of phases and structure the interpretation around

these phases. Galjart and Buijs (1982), for example, suggest four principal stages of a process of participation: promotion, first action phase, construction phase and consolidation phase.

Since participation evolves over time, interpretation would be helped if it were undertaken within the framework of some expected structure of the process. Again there are no universal models in this respect, other than a suggestion that such a framework can be used to place all the material gathered in the monitoring exercise within some overall, coherent process. The important thing is to work on the assumption of this kind of framework and to develop it from the beginning of the monitoring exercise.

PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION

Given the qualitative nature of a process of participation, its evaluation demands that local people should be directly involved. In this respect it could be argued that the technique of participatory evaluation would be appropriate to the evaluation of participation. We have, however, already cautioned that both concepts are not the same, the evaluation of participation is the evaluation of a discrete process, whilst participatory evaluation is a form or technique of evaluation which is relevant in evaluation exercises across the sectors in rural development. Furthermore participatory evaluation as a technique is often examined in the literature within the overall concept of participatory action research. Research and evaluation are both essentially supportive dimensions of development project practice, and indeed are at different ends of the project continuum, and they are commonly lumped together in examinations of key participatory aspects of project practice. Rahman (1982), Hatch (1983) and Fernandez and Tandon (1986), for example, review both concepts together and effectively argue that they are dimensions of the same process.

Participatory evaluation is, therefore, a relevant technique in the evaluation of participation. In practice it is also often referred to as self-evaluation which emphasizes evaluation not only as a learning process but also as a vital dynamic in the overall process of participation. Where the local people are involved in discussion, debate, analysis and interpretation of project activities, so they come to share a common perspective, a shared commitment to action and this can transform a loose group of individuals into a cohesive and effective project group. In a broader sense participatory evaluation methodologically is entirely consistent with the whole process of participation in development; given the general thrust of people-centred, bottom-up development, it makes sense to ensure that the process of evaluation has similar characteristics and meanings. In this sense it would be a contradiction to have people-centred, bottom-up processes of development evaluated by externally commissioned and designed initiatives. In their recent study on participatory evaluation, Chaudhary and Tandon (1988) characterized the central concept as follows:

> "The central characteristic of **participatory evaluation** is that people involved in a given development programme or organization, both as implementors and as beneficiaries, start participating in, and take charge of the evaluation efforts.

> The control over the process of evaluation remains in the hands of those who are developing and implementing and benefitting from the programmes. Thus, the evaluation serves the interest of furthering the benefits and improving the programmes and organizations involved in development at the base, and not those who are intending to control it from the top. In a way, **participatory evaluation** is an attempt at redefining and reaffirming development as a 'bottom-up', 'people-centred', 'people-controlled' process and not a technocratic, top-down intervention. It is this thrust that provides the distinctive meaning to **participatory evaluation** methodology."
>
> (Choudhary and Tandon, 1988:8)

Participatory evaluation, therefore, is concerned with the assessment of project outcomes; it seeks to assess the impact of a project (e.g. in terms of participation), to analyze the underlying assumptions upon which the project is based, to consider the relevance of the project activities in the socio-political context and to judge the manner in which these activities have been carried out. The focus of **participatory evaluation**, therefore, is at the project level and it entails the active and direct involvement of local people along with field staff. This focus is a critical element of **participatory evaluation** since it helps shift the whole emphasis of the evaluation exercise away from an external bureaucracy and down to the grass-roots level. Indeed it could be argued that **participatory evaluation** has its own distinctive style and that the basis of its approach is radically different from conventional evaluation practice. For example, the Centre for Rural Health and Social Education in Tamil Nadu, India suggested the following as the basic premises of **participatory evaluation:**

(a) The actual work carried out by a group of people in the context of socio-economic, political and cultural realities, spread over a long period of time, cannot be evaluated by a Team of Evaluators, however competent the evaluators may be, by merely spending a week or 10 days at the project area;

(b) Even though the impact of the programme may have far reaching social and political implications, nonetheless, it is difficult to establish cause-effect relationships since social change is a complex phenomenon;

(c) Evaluation is a continuous process and the outcome of the evaluation cannot be dissociated from the process of the evaluation. Therefore, if the outcome is viewed independently and is not related to the process itself, then it may not be a fruitful exercise:

(d) Evaluation is effective and useful only when the people concerned themselves carry out this exercises against a set of objective criteria; and the exercise is preferably facilitated by an outsider in whom the project staff have confidence;

(e) Evaluation is a process which benefits the evaluators as much as it is helpful to the project people;

(f) Evaluation should be delinked from funding to widen it's scope and to eliminate a sense of fear psychosis usually associated with evaluations;

(g) Evaluators should clearly state their role in this exercise at the very beginning in order to overcome role ambiguity. For example, it would be helpful if the evaluators, through their spoken words and actions, communicated that they were performing a facilitative role rather than an investigative role;

(h) Evaluation should follow a participatory model if it is to be productive not only at the chief functionary level but also down to the core staff of the organization;

(i) Evaluations should share at the very beginning the methodology and the tools to be used for the evaluation and the project staff should be convinced of the objectivity of the tools and should be inclined to use those tools; and

(j) Lastly and most importantly, at the very outset the objectives of the evaluation should be clearly spelt out.

Hatch (1983) similarly examines the basis of the practice of **participatory evaluation** and suggests that issues such as community ownership of the instruments of evaluation, simplicity of language used, regular and systematic application and allowing evaluation to evolve are essential principles of this practice.

Equally importantly most commentators see **participatory evaluation** not as a one-off limited exercise but as itself a continuous process which unfolds in a series of stages. Too often evaluation becomes a snap-shot exercise conducted by people not directly related to the project and in which the local people are seen as the objects of the evaluation exercises. **Participatory evaluation** not only sees people as subjects of the exercise but equally importantly sees the evaluation occurring over a period of time. Feuerstein (1986), Choudhary and Tandon (1988) and Egger (1988), for example, have all suggested a series of stages in **participatory evaluation** in which the local people play a central role. Both of the illustrative examples clearly show the process nature of **participatory evaluation** and also how the local people are closely involved at all stages. The examples compliment each other: Choudhary and Tandon sketch out these stages in a broad manner whilst Feuerstein presents the detail of actions at each stage. Both examples support the general focus of the evaluation of participation, that is the notion of an unfolding exercise and the critical stages of identifying the key parameters and the collection and interpretation of data. They similarly suggest the importance both of allocating time to evaluation and also of a systematic approach which seeks to follow the stages outlined.

STAGES OF A PROCESS OF PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION

a) All those involved in a programme need to decide jointly to use a participatory approach.
b) Next, they need to decide exactly what the objectives of the evaluation are. This is often harder than they think it will be.
c) When they have reached agreement on the evaluation objectives, it is time to elect a small group of 'evaluation co-ordinators' to plan carefully and organise all the details of the evaluation.
d) Now is also the time to decide what methods will be best for attaining the evaluation objectives. The choice of method, such as analysis of programme records or use of a questionnaire, will also be influenced by the capabilities of the people involved, and by how much time and how many resources are available for evaluation.
e) As these decisions are made, the written evaluation plan is formed. This plan shows why, how, when and where the evaluation will take place, and who will be involved.
f) Next the evaluation methods must be prepared and tested (for example, a questionnaire or a weighing scale may be needed). Selected programme participants will also need basic explanation of and training in interviewing, completing written or oral questionnaires, conducting various kinds of checks or examinations, etc. All programme participants will need explanations of the objectives and general methods to be used in the evaluation. The more they understand, the more they can participate in the entire evaluation process, wherever and whenever requested by the evaluation co-ordinators.
g) Having prepared and tested the evaluation methods, the next step is to use them to collect the facts and information required for the evaluation.
h) Then the information and data are analysed by the programme participants. The major part of this work will probably be done by the evaluation co-ordinators.
i) The results of the analysis (or the evaluation findings), are then prepared in written, oral or visual form. There are different ways of reporting and presenting the evaluation findings to different groups connected with the programme. For example, a Ministry (or programme funders) will usually need a written evaluation report but community-level participants will be better able to share results if they are presented as charts of pictures, or if they are presented during discussion meetings.
j) Programme participants then need to decide exactly how the evaluation results will be used, and how such results can help to improve the performance and effectiveness of the programme.

(Feuerstein, 1986: x-ix)

Setting Objectives: Frames of Reference
↓
Identifying Parameters and Information Needed
↓
Identifying Sources of Information
↓
Developing Methods to Obtain that Information and Data Collection
↓
Analyzing the Data
↓
Creating Future Scenarios
↓
Evolving Action Plans

(Choudhary & Tandon, 1988:16-18)

First Stage: discussion of evaluation objectives

Second Stage: collection of data between the between the animateurs and local population

Third Stage: discussion of particular aspects of the project with the people

Fourth Stage: interpretation of results

Fifth Stage: discussion of results by people

Sixth Stage: synthesis and agreement

(Egger, 1988:15)

Within the framework of the stages outlined above, there have recently appeared a number of more detailed guides or manuals which explain graphically how **participatory evaluation** should be implemented at the project level. These manuals fall into two categories; those aimed at project staff and those directed at project participants themselves. For example the FAO has pioneered the preparation of such manuals for its People's Participation Project and those written by Hulzer (1983), Oakley (1985), Brown (1986) and Stephens (1988) already assist project staff in evaluation. The most complete manual is the one prepared by Feuerstein (1986) which offers detail of each stage of the evaluation process and is essentially directed at project level workers. Feuerstein's work relies much on diagrams and illustrations and detailed and easily intelligible guidelines across the whole evaluation process. Such manuals are extremely useful and all underlie the systematic nature of **participatory evaluation.** In relation to the evaluation of participation, the main criticism that we could make of such manuals, however, is their emphasis upon quantification and the ways in which they seek to encapsulate project activities within controllable parameters. Such manuals are invaluable in **participatory evaluation**; they should be used more cautiously in the evaluation of participation.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

It would be wrong to conclude that conceptually, and particularly methodologically, development programmes and projects are currently vigorously grappling with the issue of the evaluation of participation. In comparison with statements of support for participation and efforts to develop its methodology, its evaluation has yet to substantially take off. Too often in the literature and project documentation there is a yawning gap; at the most there is reference to quantitative aspects or to participatory evaluation. However some experimentation is under way and we await results from, for example, the FAO's trials with its People's Participation Project. In the meantime we can make a few observations concerning the implications of the evaluation of participation for project practice:

(a) The evaluation of participation in development projects is a central part of the project dynamic and not an occasional or separate activity. To be successful it must be built into the whole project process and not merely be resorted to when particular judgments concerning performance are required;

(b) To evaluate participation implies a broadening of the whole evaluation concept. Quantification and controlled measurement are not enough; the demands of the qualitative dimensions of participation will push the evaluation exercise into uncharted areas and, in terms of time, resources and methodologies. a project must be ready for this;

(c) The evaluation of participation, since it is a process which essentially seeks to understand how people are farming as a result of a development project, implies that people will be centre-stage. The evaluation dynamic will be internal and it suggests a wholly different style of relationships between the people and project staff.

There is much to be done. None the least the evaluation of participation challenges the professional evaluator to rethink practice and procedures and to suggest ways in which we might better understand such qualitative processes of development.

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